

Peter Harvey talks to Steve Upton

A STRAGGLE of girls wait outside the dressing room door and no one takes any notice. We'd seen it all before, right? When a band finishes its gig, the chicks come round to the dressing room. It's almost part of the routine.

But on this particular night, and unbeknown to the journalists involved, WISHBONE ASH, are witnessing a further emergence of their pulling power, if you'll excuse the expression.

Steve Upton put his finger on the problem just before the band were leaving for yet another tour of America: "We were actually beginning to wonder if something was wrong with us," he said.

"Over the years we've always appealed to boys, probably because they were interested in the



Wishbone: the image is getting stronger

guitar work, but it did get to a point where we were getting a bit worried. I know, were we latent homosexuals or something?"

Needless to say, you're about as likely to see Wishbone make with the limp wrists and lipping lips as a guardsman outside Buckingham Palace. But the appearance at last of those female hangers-on does mean a lot.

Afraid

The short tour they have just sandwiched between American tours was a complete success and despite critical abuse the Wishbone image has never been stronger.

On the way to Portsmouth, in a luxury coach with champagne and hostesses, Wishbone's bassist Martin Turner, had explained how the band had developed.

"We were all too afraid to sing for the first few years," he said. "I

suppose really it was just a matter of confidence. We'd always had songs but no one wanted to be the one to sing them."

It was Wishbone Four that really changed everything. Suddenly the band emerged as a composite rock unit. All the fine Wishbone attributes plus vocals. Naturally the Press was sceptical but aren't they always so when something is new? The band were glad about that.

Steve: "Really it was the Press that gave us our image, y'know being stylish and controlled and all that. There have never been any reports saying we are a load of shit, always somewhere in the middle. At least on the last album, the writers began to commit themselves and said they didn't like it. Then we get kids writing in to say the reviews are not true and suddenly the band is a topic."

He's talking on the phone from his publicist's office, glad perhaps that the band is too busy to do a

proper interview. They are off to America the following day and for Steve, that couldn't be better.

"We do tend to take a lot of time off from touring. Like this time we had to sort out all the tapes for the double live album, that was very hard because we had taped five gigs. But I always feel none productive when I'm not on stage. I don't get any physical use in the studios so now I can't wait to get back on stage. It's always been like that with us. There is an urge to play."

Accepted

Steve has a theory about the group's music and its continued acceptance:

"The public in general have reached a sort of high where everything is accepted. They like all sorts of things. Sure times have changed, the fans get even younger but I don't think we will ever appeal to them. It's the very young kids who buy the singles and make heroes out of Gary Glitter and David Bowie. Everything is so outrageous to them and it's part of growing up, like a first orgasm I suppose. I know we don't appeal to that group of listeners, I think we get them in the second stage."

Lucky

"We have been lucky with our fans in England. We have a certain audience that have stuck with us. We get kids saying they have seen us six times and each time they bring more friends."

The last mini Wishbone tour was really only a sop to their fans. They realise, since it was completely sold out, that more gigs are needed, but like most

bands successful in America, they see the danger of over exposing themselves. Still Steve says they are planning a really big tour for the future, though they will be in America until December.

First project when they

get back will be the next studio album, though that is very much in the tentative planning stage at the moment.

"We've been laying down ideas on tape but they are as yet very loose, y'know it's like writing notes for a book or an

article."

In the meantime the fans will be eagerly awaiting the release of that there double album, knowing that if it's as good as the gigs on the last tour, it will be mighty tasty. It's bound to be a hit too, remember the chicks?